

1

2

3

4 **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**
5 **NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**
6 **SAN JOSE DIVISION**

7

8

JAMES R. ZUEGEL,

9

Plaintiff,

10

v.

11

MOUNTAIN VIEW POLICE
DEPARTMENT (MVPD), et al.,

12

Defendants.

13

14

Case No. [17-cv-03249-BLF](#)

15 **ORDER GRANTING WITH LEAVE TO
AMEND IN PART AND WITHOUT
LEAVE TO AMEND IN PART
DEFENDANTS' MOTION TO DISMISS**

16 [Re: ECF 19]

17 Plaintiff James Zuegel ("Plaintiff") brings this action alleging violations of 42 U.S.C.
18 § 1983 and state law against Defendants Mountain View Police Department ("MVPD"), City of
19 Mountain View (the "City"), and Mountain View Police Officers Patrick Ward, Britton Moore,
20 and Marco Garcia (collectively, "Officer Defendants") (together with MVPD and the City,
21 "Defendants"). *See* ECF 18 ("Amended Compl."). Before the Court is Defendants' motion to
22 dismiss the Amended Complaint. ECF 19-1 ("Mot."). The Court held a hearing on Defendants'
23 motion to dismiss on February 8, 2018. Based on the briefing, oral argument presented at the
24 hearing, and the applicable law, the Court hereby GRANTS Defendants' motion to dismiss WITH
25 LEAVE TO AMEND IN PART and WITHOUT LEAVE TO AMEND IN PART.
26

27

I. BACKGROUND¹

28

The Court previously discussed the factual and procedural background of this case in its
Order Granting in Part and Denying in Part Plaintiff's Motion to Proceed Under a Pseudonym,

¹ Plaintiff's well-pled factual allegations are accepted as true for purposes of the motion to dismiss. *See Reese v. BP Exploration (Alaska) Inc.*, 643 F.3d 681, 690 (9th Cir. 2011).

1 Change Case Caption, and Redact Surname on Privacy Grounds. *See* ECF 16. The Court reviews
2 the relevant background again here. Although Plaintiff originally filed this action *pro se* on June
3 6, 2017 (ECF 1), he retained counsel on July 11, 2017 and an Amended Complaint was filed on
4 September 13, 2017. *See* Amended Compl.² The Amended Complaint asserts violations of
5 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and various state law causes of action against Defendants based on the events
6 surrounding Plaintiff's warrantless arrest inside his home on June 7, 2015. *See generally*
7 Amended Compl.

8 Plaintiff alleges that on May 23, 2015, he and his wife, Lisa, accompanied their son, JR, to
9 the Mountain View El Camino YMCA ("YMCA"). *Id.* ¶ 20. JR is severely autistic, and is
10 assisted by a certified Autism Service Dog named Oakland. *Id.* ¶ 14. After JR's swim lesson,
11 Plaintiff waited for his family on a couch in the YMCA lobby with Oakland sitting at his feet. *Id.*
12 ¶¶ 20-21. Plaintiff alleges that two young girls were seated nearby on the couch, and chatted with
13 Plaintiff about Oakland, who Plaintiff explained was a service dog for his son. *Id.* ¶ 22. One of
14 the two girls petted Oakland. *Id.*

15 When JR emerged from the Family and Special Needs Shower Area, he was making loud
16 noises and eventually sat between Plaintiff and one of the girls on the couch, before attempting to
17 "dart" away. *Id.* ¶ 23. Plaintiff grabbed JR by the back of his t-shirt to bring him back to the
18 couch, saying something to the effect of "sit your butt down," which was Plaintiff's routine
19 response to JR's attempts to dart away. *Id.* Soon after, Lisa entered the lobby and Plaintiff
20 indicated to her that a foul smell was emanating from a homeless man seated nearby. *Id.* ¶ 24. As
21 Plaintiff's family prepared to leave, a woman who appeared to be the girl's mother approached
22 and Plaintiff asked the woman if the girls were twins, because Plaintiff himself was a twin. *Id.*
23 ¶ 25. The woman did not respond. *Id.*

24 A number of days later and unbeknownst to Plaintiff at the time, the minor girl's mother
25 drove her daughter to the MVPD on June 5, 2015 to report that a man with a service dog at the
26

27 ² Plaintiff's Amended Complaint filed at ECF 10 used the pseudonym "Jim Roe," pending
28 determination of Plaintiff's motion to proceed anonymously. Upon the Court's denial of
Plaintiff's motion, ECF 16, the corrected Amended Complaint was filed in the record at ECF 18.

1 YMCA had bothered and “touched” her daughter. *Id.* ¶¶ 26-28. Defendant Officer Patrick Ward
2 interviewed the daughter, who recalled that the man with the service dog slapped her on the butt
3 and asked her “how old are these buns?” *Id.* ¶ 32. Plaintiff alleges that the police conducted a
4 follow-up interview with the minor, who repeated that the man with the service dog “smacked her
5 on the butt” but did not “touch any private areas.” *Id.* ¶ 34. Plaintiff points out various issues with
6 the mother and daughter’s statements to the MVPD, and completely denies that he smacked the
7 girl on the butt or made the inappropriate comments attributed to him. *Id.* ¶ 35.

8 Based on the police interviews with the minor and her mother, Officers Ward and Britton
9 Moore allegedly entered Plaintiff’s home at 9:33 p.m. on June 7, 2015, without either an arrest
10 warrant or a search warrant, and arrested him in the presence of Lisa and JR. *Id.* ¶¶ 37-39. When
11 Plaintiff and his wife refused to be separated and interrogated in the absence of counsel, Plaintiff
12 was handcuffed and arrested. *Id.* ¶ 38. The episode was extremely distressing to the family, and
13 caused JR to become highly agitated. *Id.* ¶ 39. Plaintiff asserts that Defendants joined in the
14 “witch-hunt atmosphere” in the wake of news reports of molestation victims coming forward, and
15 that Defendants acted improperly by accepting the mother and daughter’s story about Plaintiff
16 which was “physically impossible.” *Id.* ¶ 36. Moreover, Plaintiff alleges that the Officers
17 executed a pre-existing and deliberate plan to arrest him on a Sunday so that he could not be
18 released on bail until the following business day. *Id.* ¶ 41.

19 At the police station, Officer Marco Garcia led the interrogation of Plaintiff, who denied all
20 wrongdoing. *Id.* Plaintiff claims that he was interrogated notwithstanding his request for an
21 attorney, that the Officers lied about possessing an incriminating video of the YMCA lobby, and
22 that they coerced him into consenting to a search of his cell phone. *Id.* Plaintiff was transferred
23 from the Mountain View police station to the county jail in San Jose at 1:00 a.m. where he was
24 confined overnight and for part of the following day until Lisa posted bail on June 8, 2015. *Id.*
25 ¶¶ 42, 44.

26 The Santa Clara County District Attorney filed a two count Misdemeanor Complaint
27 against Plaintiff on June 24, 2015, charging him with Misdemeanor Sexual Battery in violation of
28 Penal Code section 242-243.4(3)(1), and Misdemeanor Soliciting or Engaging in Lewd Conduct in

1 Public in violation of Penal Code section 647(a). *Id.* ¶ 44. These misdemeanor charges carried
2 the threat of sex offender registration. *Id.* Plaintiff alleges that he retained counsel and pursued a
3 “vigorous defense,” intending to bring the case to trial. *Id.* ¶ 45. Ultimately, in September 2016,
4 the Deputy DA handling the case offered Plaintiff a plea bargain which would permit Plaintiff to
5 plead guilty to a misdemeanor that did not require sex offender registration. *Id.* ¶ 46. Plaintiff
6 pled no contest to misdemeanor disorderly conduct and was placed on probation for three years,
7 ordered to perform 75 hours of community service, and barred from coming within 300 yards of
8 the YMCA. *Id.* ¶ 48. Plaintiff maintains his innocence in the criminal proceedings, admitting only
9 that he gave into the “coercive power of the threat of sex offender registration” and intends to
10 pursue habeas corpus proceedings challenging the constitutionality of sex offender registration as
11 applied to his case. *Id.* ¶¶ 47-49. Thereafter, Plaintiff intends to withdraw his guilty plea and
12 obtain a complete acquittal at trial. *Id.* ¶ 49.³

13 In this civil action, Plaintiff asserts six causes of action against: (1) the Officer Defendants
14 for violations of 42 U.S.C. § 1983; (2) MVPD and the City for violations of § 1983 (*Monell*
15 *Claim*); (3) all Defendants for violations of the Bane Act, California Civ. Code section 52.1(b);
16 (4) all Defendants for false arrest and false imprisonment; (5) all Defendants for intentional
17 infliction of emotional distress; and (6) all Defendants for reckless and grossly negligent infliction
18 of emotional distress. *See generally* Amended Compl. On October 27, 2017, Defendants moved
19 to dismiss all claims asserted against them. *See generally* Mot.

20 **II. LEGAL STANDARD**

21 “A motion to dismiss under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6) for failure to state a
22 claim upon which relief can be granted ‘tests the legal sufficiency of a claim.’” *Conservation*
23 *Force v. Salazar*, 646 F.3d 1240, 1241-42 (9th Cir. 2011) (quoting *Navarro v. Block*, 250 F.3d
24 729, 732 (9th Cir. 2001)). When determining whether a claim has been stated, the Court accepts
25 as true all well-pled factual allegations and construes them in the light most favorable to the

26
27 ³ The Court does not consider the added factual allegations in Plaintiff’s opposition brief and oral
28 argument. *See Opp’n at 11* (“Nonetheless, Plaintiff has, in his Opposition to Motion to Dismiss,
explicated his legal theories at greater length.”) The additional information provided by Plaintiff
is considered, at most, as a representation of what Plaintiff could allege if granted leave to amend.

1 plaintiff. *Reese v. BP Exploration (Alaska) Inc.*, 643 F.3d 681, 690 (9th Cir. 2011). However, the
2 Court need not “accept as true allegations that contradict matters properly subject to judicial
3 notice” or “allegations that are merely conclusory, unwarranted deductions of fact, or
4 unreasonable inferences.” *In re Gilead Scis. Sec. Litig.*, 536 F.3d 1049, 1055 (9th Cir. 2008)
5 (internal quotation marks and citations omitted). While a complaint need not contain detailed
6 factual allegations, it “must contain sufficient factual matter, accepted as true, to ‘state a claim to
7 relief that is plausible on its face.’ ” *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009) (quoting *Bell Atl.*
8 *Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007)). A claim is facially plausible when it “allows the
9 court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged.” *Id.*

10 **III. DISCUSSION**

11 Defendants assert that they are shielded by qualified immunity at the pleading stage for
12 Plaintiff’s cause of action for unlawful arrest under § 1983, and that Plaintiff’s claims are also
13 barred by *Heck v. Humphrey*, 512 U.S. 477, 486-87 (1994). *See* Mot. at 3. Without an underlying
14 constitutional violation, Defendants further argue that Plaintiff’s *Monell* claim against the City and
15 MVPD must fail. Mot. at 7-8. In addition, Defendants argue that the state law claims should be
16 dismissed because Plaintiff fails to allege compliance with the California Tort Claims Act
17 (California Government Code § 905, et seq.). Mot. at 8. The Court resolves Defendants’ motion
18 to dismiss as follows.

19 **1. § 1983 Claim Against the Officer Defendants**

20 With respect to Plaintiff’s first cause of action, Defendants move to dismiss Plaintiff’s
21 claims arising out of the alleged unlawful arrest on the grounds that the Officer Defendants are
22 shielded by qualified immunity, and the unlawful arrest claim is barred by the doctrine articulated
23 in *Heck v. Humphrey*, 512 U.S. 477, 486-87 (1994). *See* Mot. at 4-7. Defendants argue that
24 Plaintiff should be ordered to provide a more definite statement to the extent he seeks to pursue
25 additional § 1983 claims against the Officer Defendants. *See id.* at 7. For the reasons that follow,
26 the Court finds that *Heck* bars the majority of Plaintiff’s federal claims against the Officer
27
28

1 Defendants.⁴ However, Plaintiff may be able to plead a viable § 1983 claim for a misdemeanor
2 arrest in the home at night that is not barred by *Heck*, and is granted leave to amend to attempt do
3 so. Upon amendment of the factual basis for the claim, Defendants may assert that they are
4 entitled to qualified immunity.

5 **a. Unlawful Arrest**

6 One of the several constitutional violations referred to in Plaintiff's single § 1983 cause of
7 action against the Officer Defendants is a claim that the Officers violated Plaintiff's Fourth
8 Amendment rights by arresting him without probable cause. *See* Amended Compl. ¶ 51. Before
9 reaching the qualified immunity analysis that Defendants assert on this claim, the Court considers
10 whether *Heck v. Humphrey* bars Plaintiff's claim for unlawful arrest.

11 In *Heck*, the Supreme Court considered "whether a state prisoner may challenge the
12 constitutionality of his conviction in a suit for damages under 42 U.S.C. § 1983." 512 U.S. at 478.
13 The Supreme Court held that:

14 in order to recover damages for allegedly unconstitutional conviction or
15 imprisonment, or for other harm caused by actions whose unlawfulness
16 would render a conviction or sentence invalid, a § 1983 plaintiff must
17 prove that the conviction or sentence has been reversed on direct appeal,
18 expunged by executive order, declared invalid by a state tribunal
19 authorized to make such determination, or called into question by a federal
court's issuance of a writ of habeas corpus, 28 U.S.C. § 2254. A claim for
damages bearing that relationship to a conviction or sentence that
has *not* been so invalidated is not cognizable under § 1983.

20
21 512 U.S. at 486–87. Thus, *Heck* stands for the proposition that claims for damages under Section
22 1983 are not cognizable when "establishing the basis for the damages claim necessarily
23 demonstrates the invalidity of the conviction." *Id.* at 481–82; *see also Wilkinson v. Dotson*, 544
24 U.S. 74, 81 (2005) ("*Heck* specifies that a prisoner cannot use § 1983 to obtain damages where
25 success would necessarily imply the unlawfulness of a (not previously invalidated) conviction or
26 sentence.")

27
28

⁴ The Court does not reach the question of qualified immunity as to those claims barred by *Heck*.

1 In this case, Plaintiff alleges in the pleading itself that he has retained counsel to pursue
2 this § 1983 action simultaneously with habeas corpus proceedings, and he ultimately seeks to
3 withdraw his plea and obtain an acquittal. Amended Compl. ¶ 49. But as it stands, the conviction
4 has not been reversed, expunged, invalidated or called into question. 512 U.S. at 487. The Court
5 cannot ignore the common thread throughout the Amended Complaint that Plaintiff adamantly
6 asserts his innocence in the criminal proceedings and explains that he only took the plea in order
7 to avoid sex offender registration—“even though he had engaged in no disorderly conduct and
8 committed no crime of any description.” *Id.* ¶ 48. Thus, Plaintiff’s § 1983 claim appears to be a
9 quintessential *Heck* issue, using a civil suit for damages to prove his innocence and “demonstrate[]
10 the invalidity of the conviction.” 512 U.S. at 481-82. In other words, if Plaintiff were to prevail on
11 his unlawful arrest claim against Defendants, it would necessarily call into question his criminal
12 conviction for disorderly conduct.

13 The facts of *Haack v. City of Carson City* are similar to the situation presented here, and
14 the Court finds the *Haack* court’s application of the *Heck* doctrine persuasive. No. 3:11-CV-
15 00353-RAM, 2012 WL 3962453, at *2 (D. Nev. Sept. 10, 2012). In *Haack*, the plaintiff was
16 employed as a woodshop teacher at a school in Carson City, Nevada, and carried a pocket utility
17 knife to help with his students’ projects. *Id.* at *1. After meeting with his supervisor where he
18 requested a higher salary, the plaintiff allegedly turned to the supervisor’s assistant, showed her
19 the pocket knife, and said “I was tempted to use it, but I didn’t.” *Id.* After an investigation, the
20 plaintiff was arrested for “threatening or intimidating an employee of a school district,” which
21 constitutes a gross misdemeanor under Nevada law. *Id.* at *2. Plaintiff was charged with a lesser
22 offense of “creating a disturbance in a school building,” and eventually pled no contest to an even
23 lesser charge of disorderly conduct, a misdemeanor under Nevada law. *Id.*⁵

24 In determining whether the plaintiff’s suit was barred, the *Haack* court considered
25 “whether a judgment in favor of the plaintiff would necessarily imply the invalidity of his
26 conviction or sentence; if it would, the complaint must be dismissed[.]” No. 3:11-CV-00353-
27

28 ⁵ Like the plaintiff in *Haack*, Plaintiff does not dispute that a no contest plea has the same impact
as a guilty plea or other conviction for the purposes of applying the *Heck* doctrine.

1 RAM, 2012 WL 3962453, at *4–5 (quoting *Heck*, 512 U.S. at 487). The plaintiff argued that his
2 assertion that his arrest for a gross misdemeanor was unsupported by probable cause did not
3 necessarily imply the invalidity of his conviction for disorderly conduct, a misdemeanor charge.
4 *Id.* at *5. The *Haack* court rejected this argument out of hand, reasoning that “[i]f the court went
5 along with Plaintiffs [sic] reasoning, whenever a criminal defendant enters into a plea agreement
6 which results in the entry of a plea to a lesser offense than that for which he or she was arrested,
7 *Heck* would not apply.” *Id.* Instead, the court agreed with the defendants “that plea negotiations
8 involve various considerations which may have absolutely no relationship to whether there was
9 probable cause for the underlying arrest.” *Id.* In this case, to the extent Plaintiff seeks a finding by
10 this Court that there was no probable cause supporting his arrest for his alleged inappropriate
11 conduct at the YMCA, it would imply that there was no probable cause to charge him for that
12 conduct, which would impermissibly use section 1983 to invalidate his conviction.

13 *Smithart v. Towery* also supports this Court’s conclusion that *Heck* bars certain Fourth
14 Amendment violations asserted here. 79 F.3d 951, 952 (9th Cir. 1996). In *Smithart*, the Ninth
15 Circuit permitted the plaintiff’s excessive force claim to proceed because a successful section
16 1983 action on that claim would not necessarily imply the invalidity of his arrest or conviction. *Id.*
17 at 952. In contrast, the Ninth Circuit unequivocally held that “[t]here is no question that *Heck* bars
18 Smithart’s claims that defendants lacked probable cause to arrest him and brought unfounded
19 criminal charges against him. Smithart may challenge the validity of his arrest, prosecution and
20 conviction only by writ of habeas corpus. To the extent that Smithart seeks to invalidate his assault
21 conviction, whether expressly or by implication, we affirm the district court’s dismissal. If
22 Smithart wishes to challenge his arrest, prosecution or conviction, he should file a writ of habeas
23 corpus.” *Id.*

24 In light of the reasoning in *Heck*, *Haack*, and *Smithart*, the Court rejects Plaintiff’s
25 argument that the relief he seeks “would not invalidate or expunge his conviction of misdemeanor
26 disturbing the peace by making noise.” Opp’n at 9, ECF 22. The Deputy District Attorney did
27 “not dismiss the case” but rather, Plaintiff pled to misdemeanor disorderly conduct, was placed on
28 probation, completed 75 hours of community service, and was barred from coming within 300

1 yards of the YMCA. Amended Compl. ¶¶ 46-48. That conviction has not been overturned or
2 otherwise invalidated. For purposes of the *Heck* doctrine, the dispositive question before the
3 Court is whether a successful section 1983 claim would necessarily imply the invalidity of
4 Plaintiff's plea of no contest to misdemeanor disorderly conduct. Amended Compl. ¶ 48.

5 Plaintiff argues that this Court should ignore *Haack* because it is inconsistent with the
6 Supreme Court's decision in *Muhammad v. Close*, 540 U.S. 749 (2004).⁶ Opp'n at 9 n.2.
7 According to Plaintiff, *Muhammad* requires a determination that his § 1983 claims are not barred
8 by *Heck*. Opp'n at 8-9. The Court finds *Muhammad* distinguishable on its facts, and the case
9 does not assist Plaintiff over the *Heck* bar on the probable cause issue. In *Muhammad*, the
10 prisoner plaintiff had a confrontation with a prison guard, resulting in the plaintiff being
11 handcuffed and subjected to pretrial detention on charges of "Threatening Behavior." 540 U.S. at
12 752. After six days in mandatory detention, the plaintiff was acquitted of threatening behavior but
13 found guilty of the lesser infraction of insolence, which would not have mandated pretrial
14 detention. *Id.* The plaintiff filed a subsequent action under § 1983, alleging that the guard had
15 charged him with threatening behavior and subjected him to mandatory pretrial detention in
16 retaliation for plaintiff's prior lawsuits and grievance proceedings against the guard. *Id.* at 753.

17 The Supreme Court held that *Heck* did not bar the § 1983 case because the plaintiff did not
18 challenge his insolence conviction or any subsequent detention – he only sought damages for the
19 injuries sustained during the six days of prehearing detention resulting from the guard's retaliatory
20 motive. *Id.* at 754-55. Thus, the plaintiff was challenging only the retaliatory conduct that
21 subjected him to unnecessary pretrial detention and was not deemed to be seeking a judgment at
22 odds with his conviction. *Id.* "That is, he raised no claim on which habeas relief could have been
23 granted on any recognized theory, with the consequence that *Heck*'s favorable termination
24 requirement was inapplicable." *Id.* at 755.

25 *Muhammad* does not clarify or change *Heck* as applied to this case. Rather, *Muhammad*
26 involved a challenge to a prison disciplinary proceeding where the plaintiff did not challenge the
27

28⁶ Plaintiff's repeated citation to "*Muhammad v. Mease*" is clearly intended to reference the Supreme Court's 2004 decision *Muhammad v. Close*, 540 U.S. 749.

1 disciplinary decision itself and the challenge did not affect the fact or duration of confinement. *Id.*
2 at 754-55. In contrast, Plaintiff challenges whether Defendants had probable cause to arrest him
3 and denies wrongdoing of any kind. *Muhammad* is therefore not applicable to Plaintiff's claim
4 that Defendants lacked probable cause to arrest him.

5 As discussed below and at the hearing, the Court agrees that some of Defendants' conduct
6 "in connection with" Plaintiff's arrest in this case may not be barred by *Heck*. *See* Opp'n at 9-10.
7 Just as a plaintiff is not barred from bringing an excessive force claim under § 1983 even if he is
8 ultimately convicted for an underlying offense, and just as *Muhammad* could challenge his
9 unwarranted pretrial detention, Plaintiff may still plead a claim for conduct related to his arrest
10 that would not "demonstrate the invalidity" of his conviction if he prevailed. *Heck*, 512 U.S. at
11 487. However, Plaintiff's argument that his § 1983 claim for unlawful arrest can proceed despite
12 his conviction for disorderly conduct stretches *Heck* and *Muhammad* too far.

13 Prosecutors have discretion to charge defendants with crimes other than those they were
14 arrested for, and to offer plea bargains to secure convictions for crimes other than those that
15 defendants were initially charged with. Plaintiff's arrest in this case is not distinct from his
16 ultimate conviction, as he suggests. The Ninth Circuit has applied *Heck* to dismiss cases in which
17 "a criminal conviction arising out of the same facts stands and is fundamentally inconsistent with
18 the unlawful behavior for which section 1983 damages are sought[.]" *Smithart*, 79 F.3d at 952.
19 The well-pled facts make clear that Plaintiff's conviction for disorderly conduct was a lesser crime
20 that the prosecution offered so that Plaintiff would not have to register as a sex offender.
21 Amended Compl. ¶ 46 (alleging that Deputy District Attorney Audrey Pak offered Plaintiff a plea
22 bargain "in which he would admit a 'non-290' misdemeanor—in other words, a misdemeanor that
23 would not require sex offender registration," and explaining it was Pak's "last and best offer" for
24 Plaintiff "to admit a misdemeanor that would not trigger sex offender registration."). Nothing in
25 the Amended Complaint suggests that the basis for the conviction was different from the conduct
26 forming the basis of the original charges.⁷ Thus, Plaintiff's disorderly conduct plea is based on the
27

28 ⁷ That Plaintiff was actually barred from coming within 300 yards of the YMCA as part of his plea
underscores that the factual basis for the conviction arose from the same incident at the YMCA

1 same facts that led to his arrest, and is “fundamentally inconsistent with the unlawful behavior for
2 which section 1983 damages are sought.” *Haack*, No. 3:11-CV-00353-RAM, 2012 WL 3962453,
3 at *6 (citing *Smithart*, 79 F.3d at 952).

4 Put simply, if the Court were to accept Plaintiff’s allegation that he “committed no crime
5 of any description” and conclude that Defendants lacked probable cause to arrest him, that
6 determination would implicate his conviction for disorderly conduct. Amended Compl. ¶ 48.
7 Allowing a § 1983 claim for unlawful arrest to proceed in these circumstances would be an
8 improper challenge to Plaintiff’s conviction, and is properly the subject of habeas corpus
9 proceedings which Plaintiff alleges he is simultaneously pursuing. *Id.* ¶ 49. Accordingly,
10 Plaintiff’s § 1983 claim for an arrest without probable cause is barred by *Heck*, and Defendants’
11 motion to dismiss this claim is GRANTED WITHOUT LEAVE TO AMEND. Dismissal of
12 Plaintiff’s § 1983 claims is without prejudice to re-filing state law causes of action based on such
13 conduct in state court. However, without a valid basis for federal jurisdiction, the Court will not
14 exercise supplemental jurisdiction over associated state law claims.

15 **b. Additional § 1983 Claims**

16 Plaintiff’s first cause of action against the Officer Defendants combines a host of
17 additional § 1983 claims that the Court and Defendants have attempted to parse. To the extent that
18 Plaintiff asserts more than a claim for an arrest without probable cause, Defendants move for a
19 more definite statement under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(e) requesting a more sufficient
20 factual basis on which to frame their responsive pleading. Mot. at 7.⁸ The Court agrees that
21 Plaintiff’s remaining § 1983 claims against the Officer Defendants are factually deficient, but also
22 finds that the vast majority of Plaintiff’s allegations are also barred by *Heck* because they
23 impermissibly collaterally attack his criminal conviction as explained above.

24
25 that formed the basis for the original arrest and misdemeanor charges. Amended Compl. ¶ 48.
26 Moreover, the Court cannot draw the implausible inference suggested by Plaintiff at oral argument
27 that the factual basis to which he pled guilty was that his son was making a commotion and he
grabbed his son and pulled him onto the sofa. *See* Hearing Transcript at 27:6-16, ECF 39.

28 ⁸ Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(e) provides that a party may move for a more definite
statement of a pleading to which a responsive pleading is allowed if it is “so vague or ambiguous
that the party cannot reasonably prepare a response.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(e).

1 As currently pled, Plaintiff attempts to hold the Officer Defendants liable for (1) an
2 unlawful arrest of Plaintiff in his home without probable cause, without an arrest warrant, and
3 absent exigent circumstances, for an act which would have constituted a misdemeanor, in violation
4 of the Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution; (2) coercing Plaintiff to consent to a
5 warrantless search of his cell phone in violation of the Fourth Amendment and privacy and free
6 association rights secured by the First, Eleventh, and Fourteenth Amendments; (3) violation of
7 Plaintiff's Fifth Amendment right to remain silent; (4) violation of Plaintiff's Sixth Amendment
8 right to counsel; (5) violation of Plaintiff's Fourteenth Amendment due process right by
9 interrogating him after he requested an attorney and attempting to trick him by claiming to possess
10 a videotape of the YMCA lobby; (7) violation of the rights to privacy, family integrity and
11 parental relations secured by the Eleventh and Fourteenth Amendments by unlawfully invading
12 Plaintiff's home on a Sunday night and exposing his family to the sight of their husband/father
13 being led away in handcuffs; (8) violation of privacy rights by deliberately arresting Plaintiff over
14 the weekend so that he would be strip-searched and cavity-searched and confined to a cell instead
15 of permitting him to self-surrender. *See* Amended Compl. ¶ 51.

16 As explained above, the Court finds that *Heck* bars Plaintiff's § 1983 claim challenging
17 Defendants' probable cause to arrest Plaintiff. The *Heck* doctrine also directly addresses
18 Plaintiff's challenge to the lack of a warrant, the coercion to consent to a search of his phone,⁹ the
19 right to remain silent, the right to counsel, and the due process right not to be interrogated, because
20 Plaintiff could have challenged all of that conduct in motions to suppress during the criminal
21 proceedings or can pursue it in habeas proceedings. These injuries are not independent of the
22 arrest, and Plaintiff's recovery for damages on these claims would "necessarily imply the
23 invalidity of his conviction or sentence." *Heck*, 512 U.S. at 487. Under the binding authority of

24
25
26
27

⁹ Plaintiff's reliance on *Riley v. California* is misplaced. Opp'n at 7-8 (citing 134 S.Ct. 2473
28 (2014)). The Supreme Court in *Riley* considered the constitutionality of a cell phone search
incident to arrest. Here, Plaintiff alleges without any factual specificity that Defendants coerced
him to consent to a cell phone search, rendering *Riley* inapposite. Amended Compl. ¶¶ 40, 41, 51.

1 *Heck and Muhammad*, Plaintiff may not use § 1983 to collaterally attack his conviction.¹⁰

2 Moreover, none of these claims are accompanied by the factual specificity required by
3 Rule 8, and the Court would grant Defendants' request for a more definite statement under Rule
4 12(e) even if the claims overcame *Heck*. The Court also finds that many of Plaintiff's allegations
5 cast arrests at night or standard police protocol and persuasive tactics as unconstitutional without
6 explanation. However, because the *Heck* doctrine bars these claims, the Court finds that leave to
7 amend under Rule 15 would be futile. *See Fed. R. Civ. P. 15; see also Foman v. Davis*, 371 U.S.
8 178, 182 (1962). Defendants' motion to dismiss is GRANTED WITHOUT LEAVE TO AMEND
9 as to the § 1983 claims that relate to the underlying facts charged in the criminal proceedings.

10 The Court next turns to Plaintiff's claim that the Officer Defendants violated the Fourth
11 Amendment by arresting him in his home at night, absent exigent circumstances, for conduct
12 which constituted a misdemeanor. Amended Compl. ¶ 51. The Court finds that these
13 circumstances surrounding the manner of the arrest—arresting Plaintiff at home at night for a
14 misdemeanor that did not occur in the presence of an officer—could form the basis of a § 1983
15 claim if adequately pled because they threaten no consequence to the ultimate conviction.
16 *Muhammad*, 540 U.S. at 751. However, the Amended Complaint does not support a reasonable
17 inference that Plaintiff was arrested for a misdemeanor, or that Defendants entered the home
18 without consent.

19 In his opposition, Plaintiff argues that he was arrested “on misdemeanor charges” for an
20 offense that was not committed in the presence of a peace officer, which runs afoul of California
21 Penal Code section 836. Opp'n at 5. But Plaintiff over emphasizes the importance of
22 misdemeanor *charges* brought against him by the District Attorney, and does not plead any facts
23 supporting an inference that his *arrest* by the police on June 7, 2015 was only for misdemeanor
24 conduct. In any qualified immunity analysis, the Court would need to consider whether a
25

26 ¹⁰ Plaintiff's attempt to pick apart evidence such as the video footage of the witness interview to
27 challenge Defendants' probable cause to arrest him is similarly precluded by *Heck*. *See* Hearing
28 Tr. 20:11-21:2. Although this may be a proper evidentiary challenge in a criminal case, Plaintiff
 may not seek damages under section 1983 that “necessarily demonstrates the invalidity of the
 conviction.” *Heck*, 512 U.S. at 481–82.

1 reasonable officer in Defendants Ward and Moore's position could have believed his or her
2 conduct was lawful in light of clearly established law. *Saucier v. Katz*, 533 U.S. 194, 202 (2001).
3 More facts regarding whether Plaintiff was arrested for a misdemeanor or felony are required to
4 adequately plead this claim and allow the Court to reach the qualified immunity issue.

5 Defendants argue that Plaintiff was arrested for a violation of California Penal Code § 288,
6 which is a felony criminalizing "any lewd or lascivious act...upon or with the body, or any part or
7 member thereof, of a child who is under the age of 14 years, with the intent of arousing, appealing
8 to, or gratifying the lust, passions, or sexual desires of that person or the child." Mot. at 4.
9 Defendants point to Plaintiff's original *pro se* Complaint, where he alleged that when he asked the
10 officers what he was being arrested for, they responded: "Lewd and Lascivious Acts with a
11 Minor." *See* ECF 1 at 5:17-19. Plaintiff argues that the Court should ignore the *pro per* Complaint
12 and consider only the amended pleading which renders the prior pleading "non-existent." Opp'n at
13 3. Moreover, Plaintiff adds that even a reference to "Lewd and Lascivious Acts with a Minor"
14 does not implicate a violation of Penal Code § 288 or any other felony. Opp'n at 3.

15 For purposes of this motion to dismiss, the Court does not consider the allegations in the
16 superseded *pro per* Complaint. However, in looking only to the Amended Complaint, Plaintiff
17 does not adequately plead that he was arrested for a misdemeanor. Plaintiff's argument that "[t]he
18 trivial action of which [Plaintiff] was accused would have been a misdemeanor, had it been
19 committed," is unsupported by any factual allegations that would raise a plausible inference for
20 the Court to draw in his favor. *See* Opp'n at 3-4. Accordingly, Defendants' motion to dismiss this
21 claim is GRANTED. However, a § 1983 claim for an unconstitutional misdemeanor arrest in the
22 home at night would be in line with *Muhammad* in that it would not challenge the validity of
23 Plaintiff's disorderly conduct conviction. 540 U.S. at 751 ("Heck's requirement to resort to state
24 litigation and federal habeas before § 1983 is not, however, implicated by a prisoner's challenge
25 that threatens no consequence for his conviction or the duration of his sentence.") To the extent
26 that Plaintiff can do so consistent with Rule 11, Plaintiff is afforded leave to amend his § 1983
27 claim against the Officer Defendants for an unlawful misdemeanor arrest in his home at night.

28 Defendants also assert that the lack of exigent circumstances does not render the arrest

1 invalid because they entered Plaintiff's home with his wife's consent. Mot. at 4. Plaintiff argues
2 that whether Plaintiff's wife consented to the police entering her home "is a question for a much
3 later stage of these proceedings." Opp'n at 4. Not so. The Amended Complaint does not plead
4 facts raising a plausible inference that the police unlawfully entered the home. Rather, Plaintiff
5 alleges that Officers Ward and Moore "entered" the home pursuant to a "warrantless intrusion."
6 Amended Compl. ¶¶ 38-39. Again, the Court will not consider the original *pro se* allegations that
7 were removed from the Amended Complaint, but will require amendment consistent with Rule 11
8 to the extent Plaintiff seeks to state a § 1983 claim for unlawful entry into his home.

9 For the foregoing reasons, Defendants' motion to dismiss the § 1983 claims against the
10 Officer Defendants is GRANTED WITHOUT LEAVE TO AMEND IN PART under *Heck v.*
11 *Humphrey*, and GRANTED WITH LEAVE TO AMEND IN PART in order for Plaintiff to
12 contest a misdemeanor arrest in the home at night and/or a warrantless arrest without consent to
13 enter and absent exigent circumstances.

14 **2. *Monell* Claim**

15 Plaintiff's second cause of action alleges municipal liability under § 1983 against the City
16 and MVPD. Amended Compl. ¶¶ 53-55. To the extent Plaintiff asserts this claim under *Monell v.*
17 *New York City Dep't of Soc. Servs.*, 436 U.S. 658 (1978), his claims fail in the absence of an
18 underlying constitutional deprivation or injury. *See City of Los Angeles v. Heller*, 475 U.S. 796,
19 799 (1986) ("If a person has suffered no constitutional injury at the hands of the individual police
20 officer, the fact that the departmental regulations might have *authorized* the use of constitutionally
21 excessive force is quite beside the point."); *Villegas v. Gilroy Garlic Festival Ass'n*, 541 F.3d 950,
22 957 (9th Cir.2008) ("Because there is no constitutional violation, there can be no municipal
23 liability.")

24 Defendants' motion to dismiss Plaintiff's second cause of action is GRANTED WITH
25 LEAVE TO AMEND. If Plaintiff adequately alleges a constitutional violation consistent with the
26 claims discussed above that are not barred by *Heck*, he may also re-allege municipal liability
27 against the City and MVPD consistent with those claims.

3. State Law Claims

Defendants also move to dismiss Plaintiff's state law causes of action because he has not alleged compliance with the California Tort Claims Act ("CTCA") or circumstances excusing compliance, which is required before bringing a claim for money damages against a public entity. Mot. at 8 (citing *Mangold v. California Pub. Utils. Comm'n*, 67 F.3d 1470, 1477 (9th Cir. 1995)); see also *Snipes v. City of Bakersfield*, 145 Cal.App.3d 861 (Cal.App. 1983). Plaintiff argues that compliance with the CTCA is excused because the monetary damages he seeks are incidental to his request for injunctive relief. Opp'n at 10-11. The Court finds that Plaintiff's vague request for "injunctive relief fashioned to prevent any repetition of Defendants' tortious and unconstitutional conduct," is not sufficient to sidestep the requirements of the CTCA. Amended Compl. at 20.

Defendants' motion to dismiss the state law claims is GRANTED WITH LEAVE TO AMEND in order to allege compliance with the CTCA or circumstances excusing compliance. Failure to plead a valid federal claim against Defendants will result in dismissal of the remaining state law causes of action without prejudice to re-filing in state court.¹¹

IV. ORDER

For the foregoing reasons, the Court ORDERS that Defendants' motion to dismiss is:

(1) GRANTED WITHOUT LEAVE TO AMEND IN PART as to Plaintiff's § 1983 claims against the Officer Defendants that are barred by *Heck v. Humphrey*, and WITH LEAVE TO AMEND IN PART as to claims for a misdemeanor arrest in the home at night, and/or a warrantless arrest without consent to enter the home and absent exigent circumstances.

(2) GRANTED WITH LEAVE TO AMEND as to Plaintiff's second cause of action against the City and MVPD, consistent with amendment of the § 1983 claims against the Officer Defendants.

¹¹ The Court wishes to clarify that the only state law claims that can be amended are those arising from conduct forming the basis of the § 1983 claims on which the Court has permitted amendment. Plaintiff's state law causes of action based on the conduct underlying the § 1983 claims dismissed under *Heck* are DISMISSED WITHOUT PREJUDICE to re-filing in state court.

1 (3) GRANTED WITH LEAVE TO AMEND as to Plaintiff's state law causes
2 of action for failure to comply with the CTCA.
3 (4) Plaintiff shall file any Second Amended Complaint **on or before May 21,**
4 **2018.** Failure to meet the deadline to file an amended complaint or failure
5 to cure the deficiencies identified in this Order will result in dismissal of
6 Plaintiff's claims with prejudice.

7
8 Dated: April 19, 2018

9
10 
11 BETH LABSON FREEMAN
12 United States District Judge
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28